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RAILROAD RATES FOR THE BALTIMORE MEETING

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: It has been the custom for many years past to obtain a railroad rate concession for the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the affiliated societies. Formerly this was granted at one and one third—a rate, even at that time, far in excess of what could be obtained by a single professor who wished to conduct a handful of students on a geological excursion. To this rate was later added the twenty-five cents validation fee. Then came the concession of two cents per mile, for the Chicago meeting of 1907-8, a rate practically equivalent to the ordinary charges of the roads, to which must be added the validation fee. This year, the arrangements have been exceedingly liberal—one and three fifths plus the validation fee. Taking the rate from Philadelphia to Baltimore as an example: the one fare, \$2.40, and the three fifths, \$1.44, plus the validation fee, \$0.25, amount to \$4.09, a sum in excess of the regular round-trip fare of \$4.00.

I am aware that for those attending the meeting from a long distance, the rate granted *may* mean a slight reduction, but, even the scientific world is not made up of altruists, and members from the nearer localities will not pay more for their tickets than the ordinary round-trip fare, and trouble themselves besides to obtain certificates, deposit them for validation, call for them, and re-sign for the return trip—four unnecessary wastings of time—for the sake of accommodating those from a longer distance, and there is thus a possibility that the certificates presented may fall short of the required number, with the result of adding greatly to the expenses of members from a distance who put faith in the certificate plan.

I do not know, nor care to know, who is responsible for this most remarkable rate, but I do know what has been done by private individuals, and I am convinced that, with an organization so numerically strong as the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the affiliated societies at its back, the committee, if it be indued with a real desire and determination to obtain con-

cessions that are worth while, will never again offer to the most powerful scientific body of the United States, an illusory grant.

H. NEWELL WARDLE

 QUOTATIONS

HARVARD'S NEW PRESIDENT

It would appear that all the recognized demands, exacting though they are, have met satisfactory compliance in to-day's selection of a president of Harvard. Professor Lowell's attainments as a scholar, although well known for many years to the inner circle, have recently received new recognition, both in America and abroad. It is quite beyond question that his recent notable volumes on "The Government of England" have placed him first among contemporary American scholars in the field of political science. To his skill as an administrator the success of the Lowell Institute affords striking testimony, while his deep and active interest in educational questions has received proof in his effective service as a trustee of the Institute of Technology and as a member, for nine years past, of the Harvard faculty. He is a Bostonian by inheritance, by nativity, and by tradition. He is a Harvard man by education, both collegiate and professional; the university can claim no stancher allegiance than his has been. At fifty-two nature has permitted him to retain a nimbleness of mind and body which in the case of most men takes its departure at a much earlier age. Indeed, from every point of view his selection seems obvious, logical and fortunate.

The hand of the president is potent at Harvard; more so perhaps than in any sister institution. Harvard government is that of a limited monarchy, but with the right type of monarch the administration can be made to veer pretty close to the status of a benevolent despotism. To say that it has veered in this direction during the last two or three decades is the highest tribute one may pay to the consummate skill and personal power of President Eliot. But this very development, this centralization of power, influence and responsibility which the retiring Nestor among